





# CHARACTERIZATION OF MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE IN THE UNITED STATES: 1995 UPDATE

## Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>14</b>
Background	14
How this report can be used	15
Municipal solid waste in perspective	17
Municipal solid waste defined	17
Other Subtitle D wastes	17
The solid waste management hierarchy	18
Methodologies for characterizing municipal solid waste	19
The two methodologies	19
Definition of terms	20
Materials and products not included in these estimates	20
Projections	21
Overview of this report	22
References	23
<b>2 CHARACTERIZATION OF MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE BY WEIGHT</b>	<b>25</b>
Introduction	25
Materials in municipal solid waste	25
Paper and paperboard	29
Glass	32
Ferrous metals	34
Aluminum	36
Other nonferrous metals	37
Plastics	37
Other materials	41
Food wastes	43
Yard trimmings	44
Miscellaneous inorganic wastes	44
Summary of materials in municipal solid waste	44
Products in municipal solid waste	48
Durable goods	48
Nondurable goods	57
Containers and packaging	64
Summary of products in municipal solid waste	73
References	76
<b>3 MANAGEMENT OF MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE</b>	<b>84</b>
Introduction	84
Source reduction	84
Product and packaging design for source reduction	85
Modifying practices to reduce materials use	86
Reuse of products and packages	87

## Table of Contents (continued)

Chapter	Page
<b>3 MANAGEMENT OF MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE (continued)</b>	
Summary of historical and current MSW management	89
Recovery for recycling and composting of yard trimmings	89
Mixed MSW composting	89
Combustion of municipal solid waste	90
Residues from waste management facilities	91
Summary	92
References	93
<b>4 PROJECTIONS OF MSW GENERATION AND MANAGEMENT AND ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVES</b>	<b>95</b>
Introduction	95
Overview of this chapter	95
Materials generation in municipal solid waste	96
Paper and paperboard	96
Glass	97
Ferrous metals	98
Aluminum	98
Other nonferrous metals	98
Plastics	98
Wood wastes	98
Other materials	99
Food wastes	99
Yard trimmings	99
Projected growth rates for materials in MSW	101
Product generation in municipal solid waste	102
Durable goods	102
Nondurable goods	102
Containers and packaging	104
The effects of yard trimmings source reduction	107
Projections of MSW recovery	109
Discussion of assumptions	110
Scenarios for 2000	111
Scenarios for 2010	112
Projections of MSW discards after recovery	113
Projections of MSW combustion	114
Summary of projected MSW management	115
Additional perspectives on municipal solid waste	116
Generation and discards by individuals	117
Residential and commercial generation of MSW	119
Organic/inorganic fractions of MSW discards	120
Ranking of products in MSW by weight	120
References	125
<b>5 CLIMATE CHANGE</b>	<b>126</b>
Introduction	126
Relationship of Municipal Solid Waste to Greenhouse Emissions	127
Greenhouse Gas Impacts of Various Municipal Solid Waste Materials and Management of Options	128

## Table of Contents (continued)

### Appendix

A	Material Flows Methodology	132
B	Recovery Scenarios, 2000 and 2010	136

## List of Tables

Table	Page
<b><i>Materials in the Municipal Solid Waste Stream, 1960 to 1994</i></b>	
1 Generated	26
2 Recovery	27
3 Discarded	28
<b><i>Products in Municipal Solid Waste, 1994</i></b>	
4 Paper and paperboard	29
5 Glass	32
6 Metals	35
7 Plastics	38
8 Rubber and leather	42
<b><i>Categories of Products in the Municipal Solid Waste Stream, 1960 to 1994</i></b>	
9 Generated	49
10 Recovery	50
11 Discarded	51
<b><i>Products in MSW with Detail on Durable Goods</i></b>	
12 Generated	54
13 Recovery	55
14 Discarded	56
<b><i>Products in MSW with Detail on Nondurable Goods</i></b>	
15 Generated	61
16 Recovery	62
17 Discarded	63
<b><i>Products in MSW with Detail on Containers and Packaging</i></b>	
18 Generated (by weight)	67
19 Generated (by percent)	68
20 Recovery (by weight)	69
21 Recovery (by percent)	70
22 Discarded (by weight)	71
23 Discarded (by percent)	72
24 Reduction of weights of soft drink containers, 1972 to 1992	85
25 Comparison of snack food packaging, 1972 and 1987	86
26 Generation, materials recovery, composting, combustion, and discards of municipal solid waste, 1960 to 1994	91

## List of Tables (continued)

Table	Page
27 Projections of materials generated in the municipal waste stream; 1994, 2000, and 2010	97
28 Average annual rates of increase (or decrease) of generation of materials in MSW	101
29 Projections of categories of products generated in the municipal waste stream; 1994, 2000, and 2010	103
 <b>Projections of Products Generated in MSW, 1994 to 2010</b>	
30 Durable goods	104
31 Nondurable goods	105
32 Containers and packaging	106
33 Comparison of three scenarios for source reduction of yard trimmings, 2000 and 2010	108
34 Projected generation and ranges of recovery, 2000	111
35 Projected generation and ranges of recovery, 2010	112
36 Projections of materials discarded in MSW: 1994, 2000, and 2010	114
37 Generation, recovery, combustion and disposal of municipal solid waste: 1994, 2000, and 2010	115
38 Per capita generation, materials recovery, combustion, and discards of municipal solid waste, 1960 to 2010	117
39 Per capita generation of material solid waste, by material, 1960 to 2010	118
40 Classification of MSW generation into residential and commercial fractions, 1994	120
41 Composition of MSW discards by organic and inorganic fractions, 1960 to 2010	121
42 Generation of municipal solid waste, 1994 arranged in descending order by weight	122
43 Discards of municipal solid waste, 1994 arranged in descending order by weight	123
B-1 Scenarios for recovery of MSW, 2000	138
B-2 Scenarios for recovery of MSW, 2010	139

## List of Figures

Figure	Page
1 Municipal solid waste in the universe of Subtitle D wastes	18
 <b>Materials Generated and Recovered in Municipal Solid Waste</b>	
2 Paper and paperboard products generated in MSW, 1994	30
3 Paper generation and recovery, 1960 to 1994	31
4 Glass products generated in MS W, 1994	33
5 Glass generation and recovery, 1960 to 1994	33
6 Metal products generated in MSW, 1994	34
7 Metals generation and recovery, 1960 to 1994	36
8 Plastics products generated in MSW, 1994	40
9 Plastics generation and recovery, 1960 to 1994	41
10 Generation of materials in MSW, 1960 to 1994	45
11 Materials recovery and discards of MSW, 1960 to 1994	45
12 Materials recovery, 1994	46

## **List of Figures (continued)**

13	Materials generated and discarded in MSW, 1994	47
14	Generation of products in MSW, 1960 to 1994	73
15	Nondurable goods generated and discarded in MSW, 1994	74
16	Containers and packaging generated and discarded in MSW, 1994	75
17	Municipal solid waste management, 1960 to 1994	92
18	Materials generated in MSW; 1994, 2000, and 2010	96
19	Products generated in MSW; 1994, 2000, and 2010	102
20	Municipal solid waste management, 1960 to 2010	116
A-1	Material flows methodology for estimating generation of products and materials in municipal solid waste	133
A-2	Material flows methodology for estimating recovery and discards of municipal solid waste	134